

Responsible & Ethical Conduct of Research (RECR) Public Plan

1. Institutional Information

Institution: Syracuse University

Coordinating Office: Office of Research Services (ORS)

Designated RECR Contact:

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2. Background & Purpose

Federal research sponsors require education in the Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research (RECR). This plan outlines how Syracuse University meets sponsor-specific requirements for individuals supported on National Science Foundation (NSF), National Institutes of Health (NIH), and U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA) funds, and how the University communicates, tracks, and enforces these requirements.

3. Scope and Affected Individuals

This plan applies to all undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, faculty, senior/key personnel, and other research staff who are supported on NSF, NIH, and USDA-NIFA sponsored research funds. "Supported" generally means individuals directly paid from sponsor funds; NSF specifies a minimum funding level of one person-month for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers. The University also encourages RECR education for all researchers regardless of funding source.

4. Policy Statement

Syracuse University will ensure that all affected individuals complete sponsor-required RECR education and that such education is documented and tracked. The University fosters an environment that promotes research integrity and discourages research misconduct, and encourages all individuals engaged in research to complete RECR education irrespective of funding source.

5. Agency-Specific Emphasis Incorporated:

NIH: Career-stage recurrence, face-to-face discussion, faculty involvement

NSF: Explicit mentor training and mentorship

USDA-NIFA: Authorship/plagiarism, data integration, misconduct reporting

6. Completion Timeline & Frequency

Completion timeline: it is recommended that required individuals complete required training within the first *six (6) months of appointment to sponsor funds, and no later than twelve (12) months.

*Undergraduate researchers within the first ninety (90) days of appointment and no later than six (6) months.

Frequency: Institution-wide guidance: repeat or refresh RECR training at least every four (4) years across career stages (promising practice consistent with NIH guidance).

7. Modes of Instruction

Online Training (cannot be the sole source of training)

- CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative) modules appropriate to discipline
- Includes NSF-required mentor training modules and activities

Synchronous Instruction and Discussion (virtual or in-person; minimum of 4 credit hours; meets NIH minimum face-to-face requirements)

- **Formal Training:** Case-based discussions and workshops scheduled and monitored through the Office of Research Services. Open to all researchers requiring training.
- **Informal Training:** Documented (Informal Training Form) instruction and discussion within the research team (e.g., lab meetings, journal clubs) led by the PI or senior research personnel. Both presenters and attendees accrue RECR credit per training hour.

8. Tracking, Documentation, and Oversight

ORS maintains centralized records of RECR completion (e.g., CITI transcripts, seminar attendance rosters, informal training form).

Each sponsored project's Principal Investigator (PI) is responsible for ensuring affected team members complete RECR requirements and for maintaining project-level documentation.

The University designates staff to oversee compliance with sponsor requirements, including NSF verification that supported individuals have received training.

9. Communication of Requirements

ORS notifies PIs and supported personnel via email when they are identified on the *Require RECR* report. Notifications include training completion instructions, formal session schedules, and informal training documentation guidance. Reminder emails are sent at 90- and 180-day milestones to support compliance.

10. Subawards Received and Issued

RECR requirements flow down to subrecipients. Syracuse University will ensure compliance for subawards received and will include appropriate terms and expectations in subawards issued to other institutions. Documentation of completion must be available upon request.

Adapted to the 2025 RCR Plan Administrative Guidelines (Version: December 16, 2025)

11. Core Topics in RECR Training:

- **Research Misconduct:** Identifying and preventing fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism.
- **Data Management:** Acquisition, ownership, sharing, security, and record-keeping.
- **Authorship & Publication:** Responsible practices, avoiding plagiarism, and publication ethics.
- **Peer Review:** Maintaining confidentiality, objectivity, and ethical review processes.
- **Conflicts of Interest:** Financial, professional, and personal conflicts.
- **Mentor/Trainee Responsibilities:** Effective mentorship, communication, and fostering a safe environment.
- **Human Subjects:** Ethical considerations and protections for participants.
- **Animal Welfare:** Humane care and use of vertebrate animals in research.
- **Collaborative Research:** Ethical teamwork, especially with industry or international partners.
- **Laboratory Safety:** Biosafety, chemical safety, and creating inclusive environments.
- **Science in Society:** Social/environmental impacts, public trust, and professional responsibility.

Ancillary and Emerging Topics

- Rigor & Reproducibility (NIH).
- Mentoring Plans and Individual Development Plans (IDPs) (NSF/NIH program expectations).
- Research Security Training per OSTP Guidelines and CHIPS and Science Act §10634: cybersecurity, foreign travel security, research security training, and export control training.
- Open Science practices and data transparency.
- Social responsibility and science communication.
- Use of Generative AI in research: transparency, data governance, bias, reproducibility, and responsible use.

12. Review and Revision of Plan

This plan will be reviewed annually by ORS (and the designated RECR Coordinator) and revised as necessary to ensure alignment with current federal sponsor requirements and evolving best practices.

13. Exceptions

Federal agencies do not generally specify allowable exceptions to RECR education requirements. Limited, case-by-case exceptions may be considered by institutional officials only where agency or institutional requirements allow, with justification and documentation.

14. Non-compliance

- Assertive email follow-ups to affected personnel and PIs.

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- Escalation to departmental leadership and Sponsored Programs.
- Temporary holds on protocol approvals (IRB, IACUC) related to the project.
- Salary/fringe transfers for non-compliant individuals to non-sponsored funds.
- Administrative hold on release of award funds until requirements are met.

15. Program Structure by Researcher Type

Training Requirements by Researcher Type

Undergraduate Researchers

- Complete discipline-appropriate CITI RECR online modules within 90 days of appointment
- Complete at least 4 hours of Formal or Informal RECR training within the first semester

Graduate Students

Choose one option:

1. Complete CITI RECR training bundle (or Refresher if completed within past 4 years) + 4 hours of Formal or Informal RECR training within the first six (6) months and no later than twelve (12) months
2. Complete 8 hours of Synchronous Instruction and Discussion

Postdoctoral Scholars / Senior Staff / Principal Investigators

Choose one option:

1. Complete CITI RECR training bundle (or Refresher) within 6 months + 4 hours of Formal or Informal RECR training (leading or attending) within the first semester
2. Complete 8 hours of Synchronous Instruction and Discussion

16. References

- NSF Proposal & Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG) 24-1, Chapter IX: Recipient Standards – Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research (RECR).
- NIH: NOT-OD-10-019 (Update on the Requirement for Instruction in the Responsible Conduct of Research); NOT-OD-22-055 (FY 2022 Updated Guidance).
- USDA-NIFA: Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research policy page (minimum training content).
- OSTP (July 9, 2024): Guidelines for Research Security Programs at Covered Institutions (NSPM-33 implementation).
- CHIPS and Science Act of 2022, §10634 Research Security Training Requirement; §10337 Responsible Conduct in Research Training.
- Syracuse University ORIP: RCR/RECR Training Plan (baseline program elements and contact).

